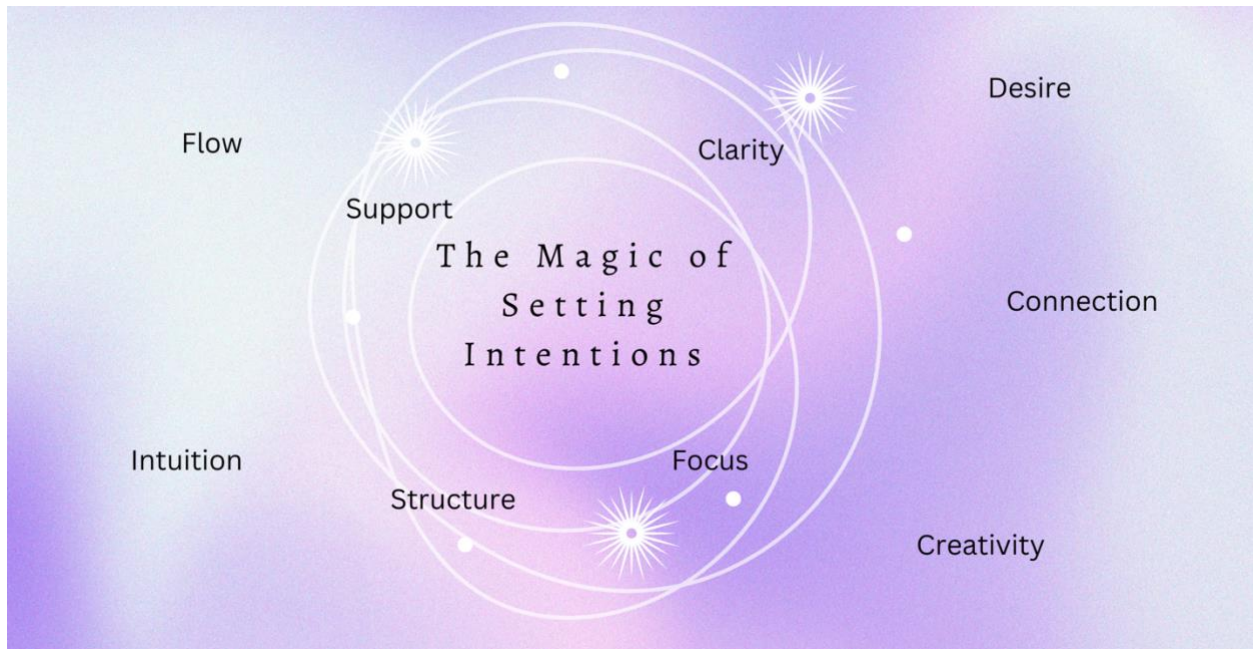


The Magic of Setting Intentions

A 7-day process for tuning into your intuition and defining what you want to create.



The 7-day process *for tuning into your intuition and defining what you want to create* was originally created for women in **The Incubator: An online coworking space for cultural creatives**. The Incubator is a space that honors the process of creating in addition to the result.

While working with women on creativity projects since 2008, I found something that was missing. There was a disconnect between a desire to create and the elements of both structure, flow, and time. Wanting to produce something from your creative expression is beautiful. Some things can be created in a month or two and others take ten to twenty years. So, being real about what is happening in your life, and the feelings or life adjustments that emerge during the creative process will help with clarity, patience, desire, frustration, fears, doubts, and inspiration to move you towards producing something – or letting it go.

Intentional creativity requires structure and flow. Creating structure gives you the container for your creativity to be held. Think of the artist who begins with a certain kind of paint or material and the structure: a canvas, a box, a pottery wheel. Writing needs paper, a word document, a notebook, or a device with an audio feature to hold the words, feelings, thoughts, and ideas. It is natural and important to create goals and structure for a writing project or any creative process that allows for a flow of ideas to come into form.

In the Incubator, we set some intentions during the first month. The intentions help to guide us with our creative projects while also helping us navigate life during a four month period. You begin by pointing your arrow towards a destination and make adjustments, and course corrections along the way. An intention will hold your idea and bookmark it for you when you need to step away and participate in something else that is happening in your life.

I share the 7-day process with you in the hopes that it will support you during your creative adventures.

#yourvoicematters #enjoytheprocess



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DAY One: Say Yes, with a list of goals and desires.

"Saying yes . . . saying yes is courage. Saying yes is the sun. Saying yes is life." ~**Shonda Rhimes, Year of Yes: How to Dance It Out, Stand in the Sun and Be Your Own Person**

"In the space between yes and no, there is a lifetime. It's the difference between the path you walk and one you leave behind; it's the gap between who you thought you could be and who you really are; it's the legroom for the lies you will tell yourself in the future." ~**Jodi Picoult, Change of Heart**

Say YES! To support your yes, there are seven days of exercises and prompts that will guide you to set intention and go deeper with your desire and your why and the creation of a structure. Today is a beginning.

The purpose of seven days of setting intentions is to provide a template to look at your intentions from different angles with the hope that you will find depth and clarity around what you want to explore during the next six – twelve months. Or choose another time frame, any time frame that supports you.

The definition of intention is, "a thing intended, an aim or plan." Setting Intention, along with setting goals, gives you a focus and clarity. This is a fluid document. Spend the next month tweaking it and put something on your calendar to review this weekly or monthly.

Spending a few weeks on Intention will also help anchor it in with feeling and emotion which is a driver of energy towards your goal.

Let me say that again. "Feeling and Emotion" are "Drivers of Energy."

Setting an intention now gives you a guide to return to during the next six - twelve months. It is a template for focus, re-evaluation, re-commitment, and shifting desire. It is a place to notice when you are on track, off track and when you need to step away and dig in or when it is time to climb the next mountain. It will also help you notice when it is time to re-evaluate. Maybe there is something on your list that you don't want to do any longer or it evolves into something else.

Creativity with a purpose needs two elements. Setting Intention creates a structure for your creativity and room to flow within it.

Make a list of goals and desires you have for the next six to twelve months. Creativity projects, writing projects, vacation, work, play, activity, making money, building your business, relationships, and more. Let this be a free-flowing list. The list is going to help you see what is really important to you during this time. This list will change, and you will add and delete items.

Set up something in your calendar to reevaluate your intentions weekly and monthly. Add and delete to point your arrow in the direction of your desire. This is a fluid structure, and it will change.

Today is a place to begin.

Day 1 Prompts:

*Make a list of goals and desires you have for the next six - twelve months.

*Notice how you feel about each item on the list

*Are there "should's"? Why are they on the list? No judgement. This is about clarity and noticing. Sometimes we have things we have to do because we care about someone or finishing this "thing" will free you to do more of what you want to do in the future.

*Play with this list. If it feels hard to make a list, then write down some simple things.

1. Write for 5 minutes.
2. Take a daily walk.
3. Clean a drawer.

Then, see what other ideas show up for you. Read and review. Play with it. Tweak it. Make adjustments. Remove things. Add things.

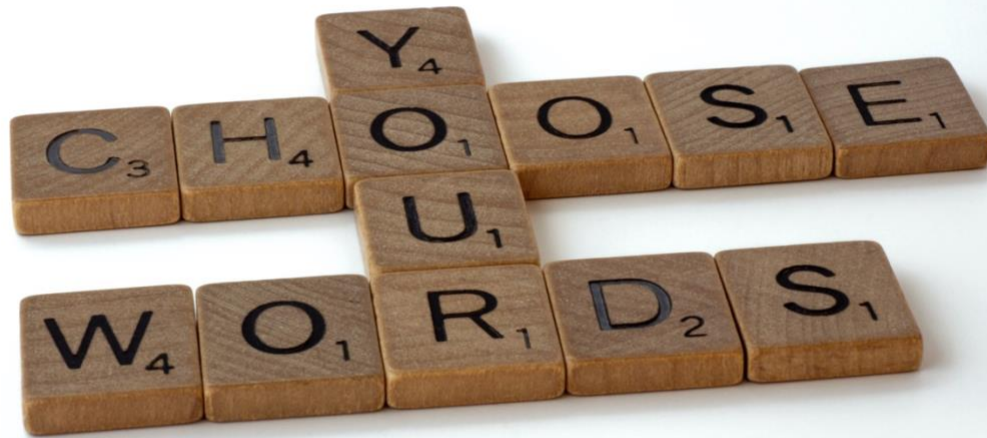


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DAY Two: Choose Words and Category descriptions.

"We live and breathe words." ~Cassandra Clare, Author Clockwork Prince

This prompt has a lot of details with a step-by-step process for the next layer in setting intentions for the next six to twelve months.

You may want to read through this prompt and then decide how much time you want to spend on it. My intention is to help you tune into what you want to focus on. This is another angle or perspective to help gain clarity. It is NOT "homework."

Take some time to read through this and if you want to answer the questions and write things down, go for it. If you want to read through and let the ideas stir around, do that.

Part 1: Did you choose a word or words at the beginning of the year to set an intention and focus? If you can think of what the words are, write them down and sit with them for a minute.

*Do you still feel a resonance with the words?

*Have the words changed?

*How have they served you so far?

(If you didn't pick a word or set an intention for the year, choose a few words now, that describe the essence of what you want to explore.)

Part 2: Now, look at the list of goals and desires from yesterday. If you didn't make a list, write down a few things you want to create. (A book, a program, a blog, a podcast, an update of your website, a writing habit, a piece of art, or something you want to explore about yourself and your life.)

*Does your word(s) for the year connect with any of the goals on your list? (It is fine, if it doesn't. This is part of the process. No right or wrong)

*What are some additional words you want to add?

*Do you have new words for next year bubbling?

Part 3: Now, if you have a list of goals, some writing and creative expression, and some other goals (relationships, business, money, health) rearrange the goals on your list into categories. Any category that makes sense. Maybe your goal list has some writing goals, some work goals, some relationship goals. Take a few minutes and break the list into a few categories.

Final step: Choose a word to go with each list. The only “must” is that you can feel something with the word. The feelings will help you point your arrow and stay connected to the energetics of an intention.

One more reflection about goals:

Reflect on what you may need to give up, for now, to create room for your goals.

For example, Kelly Notaras, author of, "The Book You Were Born to Write," shared that she gave up her morning exercise routine for a few months while she was finishing her book. It wasn't something she would want to give up forever, but it gave her time in the morning to write.

Maybe the thing you need to give up is negative self-talk or doubt or beliefs that limit you. Think about what you need to do to create room for your goals.

Day 2 Prompts:

*What changes are happening in your life?

*What do you want time to create?

*What are you willing to give up so you can claim that time for yourself?

Tomorrow, we will add another layer.



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DAY Three: Add feelings with descriptive words

“Just how do I contact the universe? It starts with just being quiet and following your feelings. Really, it’s about getting in touch with yourself because you are your own point of contact with the universe. Spend some time totally relaxing every day, breathing deeply, and letting your mind wander anywhere it likes without rules. Give some exclusive time to yourself, just feeling and thinking whatever you like, and forget trying to be spiritual. Just be yourself.” ~Mike Dooley, Infinite Possibilities: The Art of Living Your Dreams

Day One: you created a list of goals and desires for the next six to twelve months. It could be one goal, one desire or it could be 25 goals and desires. Play with it to see what resonates with you. You can keep adding to the list.

Day Two: you organized the list by category and chose a few words to describe each of the categories on your list. (If you have one thing on your list, choose a word or words for that.)

Day Three: Today, let’s add even more feeling to the list. What does your life feel like as you work on and complete your goals? What does it feel like to express yourself with creativity? (or to write a book, blogposts, songs, art, dance, build a business, organize a closet and process feelings with creative expression)?

Have fun writing some descriptions about what you want to create. Lay a foundation now and continue to tweak and change it. Add to it as you uncover and discover more.

Day 3 Prompts:

*Write a brief or detailed description of everything you want to create in the next few months.

*Add feelings and additional words to describe the categories. This can include a more detailed “why” or the passion you have for each area of your life.



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DAY Four: Look at a calendar and create space

"I think people who vibrate at the same frequency, vibrate toward each other. They call it - in science - sympathetic vibrations." ~Erykah Badu

The exercise today is about tuning into the energy of what is happening in your life. Look at a calendar and feel into the energy of your weekly and weekend schedule. Feel into the energy of the next six to twelve months. This will help you see how the timing of your goals and desires are aligned with the other things you are planning.

Creating anything requires time. So, tuning in to what matters the most to you will help you see if there is something in your life that will need an adjustment.

As you set intention, it isn't in the "doing" right now. It is taking the time to tune in to your desires to help you set a structure. In that structure, flow has room to grow. This is connected to energy, and you are setting something in motion.

Trust me. The power of setting up this structure will support you when things feel wobbly, when things get busy and when something else distracts you. For now, take some time to reflect and write a few things down.

Write things on the calendar and get clear on activities in your business and personal life. Zoom calls, in person meetings and events, fun, and rest.

Day 4 Prompts:

*Look at a calendar for the next year.

*Energetically feel into the best space for your creativity to emerge.

*As you look at the calendar, make a note of the energy you feel in each week, in each month. Tune in to each month. Feel the rhythm of energy. Trust that what you feel is guiding you and is perfect for you.

*Mark it down somewhere and connect a few words. The energy may be words to describe what you have already committed to or there may be words like Rest, Take Action, Fast, Slow, Sparking. Let your intuition guide you. Write it down. That's all for now.



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DAY Five: Keep a record of your spontaneous ideas

“Creativity is really the structuring of magic.” ~Anne Kent Rush

In the process of setting intentions, ideas will begin to bubble. You will receive clarity about what’s important to you. What you value. The message you want to give to the world. You will uncover how you want to use your voice.

To support the uncovering, set up a structure to record the ideas that are floating around you. It could be a small notebook to carry in your pocket or an app on your phone like Notes or Voice Notes. Decide on something that will work for collecting clues. You want to have easy access to this so that the blip of an idea or a song or a word or a desire can be remembered. You are a detective in your life. You are a research project.

In the notebook or in the app, you are going to write or record a few words or a sentence about things that catch your attention. If you want to write more about it in another notebook or in a word document, go for it. In the small notebook or on the app, write something short so you can remember.

This activates your brain and heart and intuition. You are sending a message to the universe saying, “I am ready to receive more inspiration!” You are living life creatively and you are ready to discover something new.

You may continue with the practice to find clues, over the next few months. Try it for a few days or a week and notice what you discover.

Tune in to what works for you.

Following the energy, taking one step at a time, notice the feelings in your heart and body. Say yes. It will open you to thoughts and feelings and ideas that you hadn't had until you followed the breadcrumbs of inspiration.

One more step is to write words or ideas on index cards. This exercise of becoming a detective and co-creating with the Universe, increases inspiration and synchronicity.

Day 5 Prompts:

*Write down at least one thing every day that caught your attention. A book, a film, a conversation, a quote, a business idea, a memory, an animal or bird.

*If inspired, write about a situation where you had an intuitive knowing and you followed the breadcrumbs. What happened? Make a list of the details and the small steps that followed.

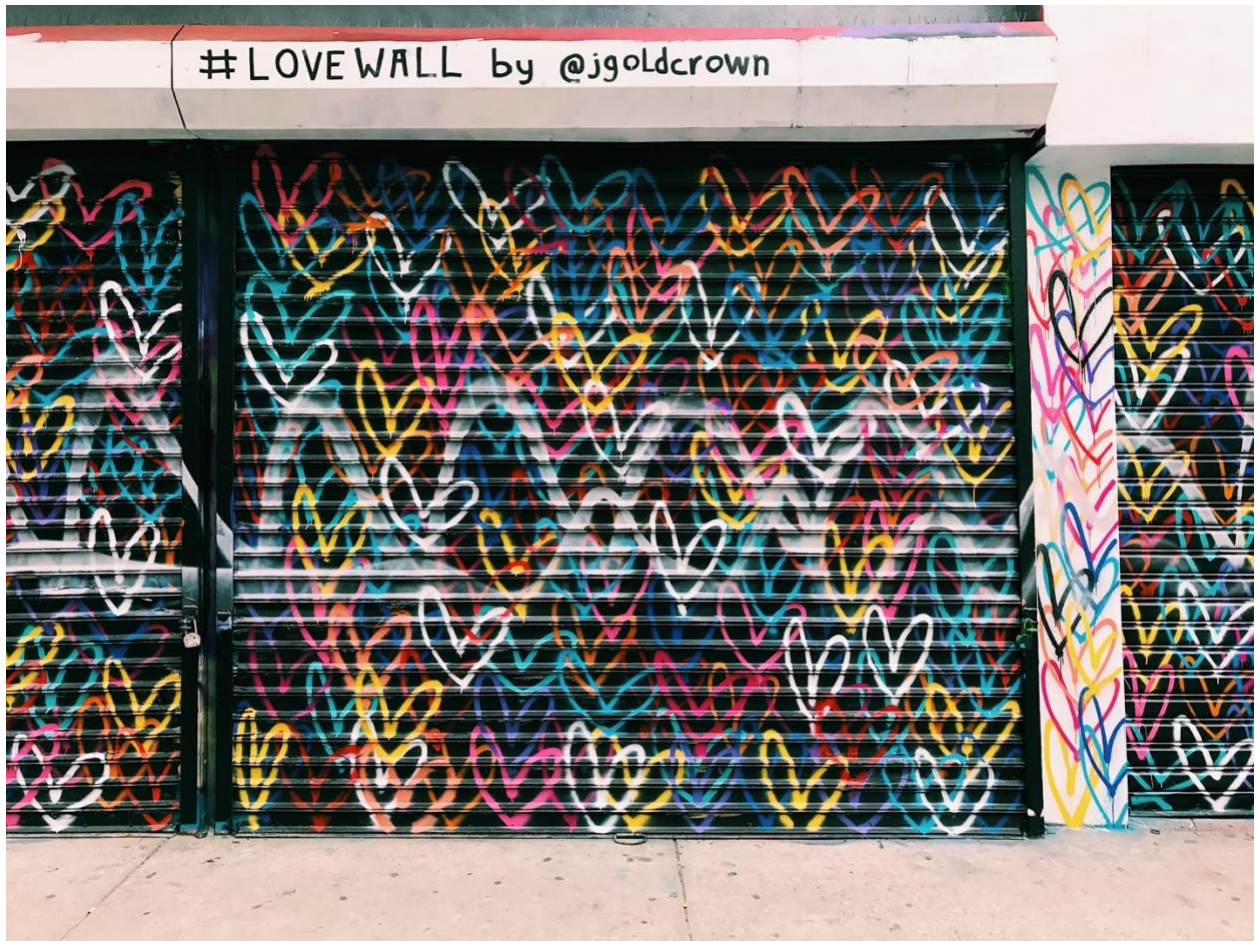


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DAY Six: Fall in love with your creative expression.

“When love first happens, the individuals are giving each other energy unconsciously and both people feel buoyant and elated. That’s the incredible high we call being ‘in love.’ Unfortunately, once they expect this feeling to come from another person, they cut themselves off from the energy in the universe and begin to rely even more on the energy from each other--only now there doesn’t seem to be enough and so they stop giving each other energy and fall back into their dramas in an attempt to control each other and force the other’s energy their way.” ~James Redfield, The Celestine Prophecy

The quote by James Redfield talks about “falling in love” and this same feeling is connected to creative expression. It is why there was so much music, art, film and writing that was produced during the pandemic. People tuned into their creative selves to feel a connection to love and inspiration. It is healing and nourishing to create.

As you create, there are moments when you fall in love with your words, your art, and the world around you. Inspiration strikes and you fall in love with an idea and a desire and a compelling pull to create... And you fall in love with yourself.

Then, there are moments when you may feel stuck or uninspired or lost in the process of your project. Maybe you think the project should be loving you, inspiring you, giving to you. Maybe your writing and inspiration feel flat.

Setting an intention will help you return to your project when life pulls you in another direction for a while. You may revise and redefine your intention because something changes. Knowing that the development of you, and getting to know yourself even more, is at the core of every project.

A couple of tips:

*Create a list of mantras, “why” reminders and reflective questions to keep you on track or help you get back on track.

*Why do I want to write this or create this?

*What is the message I want to speak into the world?

*What is the intention of this project/book/chapter/business idea?

*How do I want to tell this part of the story?

*What creative expression am I drawn to in this moment?

*Is there another way for me to express what I am feeling?

If you are writing a book or creating a program, or in a creative process of any kind, setting Intentions will be a lifeline.

You will fall in love with yourself.

Day 6 Prompts:

*Make a list of mantras, short sentences that will help you reconnect to your intention and desires and goals. They may be words you already use to disrupt negative thinking or something else. Find your inner coach, supporter, cheerleader.

*Do you have a routine for writing and creating? Make a list of a few things you can do to activate your idea, wherever you are. It may be a warm or cold beverage, a song or a yoga pose or a chant. Set the structure so that when you travel, when you get busy, you can flip the switch on to creative inspiration. Something that lets you know you are ready to hear the words and create.

*Create a visual reminder and tape it to your computer, wall, refrigerator, bathroom mirror. The name of your book. The name of a project. "The Incubator." The name of a character; the name of your business or a program you are creating; something visceral about your art like clay, yarn, photos, nature, or a few words to help you stay tuned in to the chapter you are writing and the exploration you are on with yourself.



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DAY Seven: Connect to Desire and Feel the Magic of Creativity

I've learned that when you just listen to the music, it will carry you. You will want to play with it. And it's not just you. It's a combination of the audience, the other band members, the spirit of the house, the ancestors, the spirit of the horn itself, or your voice. It's a live creative process. It's like flying. I've also learned that stage fright is really energy. It's here to help you, to give you what you need for the transaction that goes on between an audience and a performer. So now I welcome it, because I know it's part of the support, and I try to remember to say thank you. ~Joy Harjo

Listen to the music, to the words, to the creative impulse, it will carry you. Play with it. Whatever it is, you are a creative person and claiming that will increase the magic.

"I am a writer."

"I am a creative person."

"I am an artist."

Setting intention is about connecting to desire. It may be a desire to write something every day so you can find a deeper meaning to life or uncover how you really feel about something. You may want to create so you feel more alive. While you are creating and connecting with your creative style, your intentions are like putting a stake in the ground to declare something. They are about loving and believing in yourself and increasing compassion for your humanness.

Setting Intention requires patience, commitment, showing up for yourself and asking for support. It requires that you believe that this is possible. You don't have to know the how. Feel into the possibility.

Let's end this week by sprinkling pixie dust and love on all our intentions or waving our witchy wands. Turn up the volume on miracles and magic and the belief that the universe has your back and is conspiring to bring all the puzzle pieces together in support of your intentions.

Day 7 Prompts:

*When you read over your list of intentions, what feels true? Is there joy? Struggle? Determination? Excitement? Doubt? Fear?

*Reflect on your beliefs. Write a few lines about what you are feeling and noticing at the end of the week of setting intention.

*This is a beginning. Spend some time exploring your intentions this month. Create space for them. Write them down. Paint them. Dance them. Sing them. Carry them with you. Post them on the wall. Take them on a walk with you. Talk to them. Ask them questions.

*Whatever serves you. Notice what you want and need. Prepare for the next six months to a year and see what unfolds in the mysterious world of creativity.



DAY Eight: NEXT STEPS

If I want to do the work well, I need mentors to guide me, elders to accompany me, and accomplices to encourage me on. I'm not supposed to know how to do this alone. ~Chani Nicholas

One last thing. Creativity helps you become more of who you really are. That can be exciting and scary. Vulnerability can come from letting people see parts of you that have kept hidden and vulnerability can be connected to more joy and happiness. Be gentle with yourself.

You don't have to do this alone. Hire a coach. Join a writing group. Find like-minded people where you can practice this newly discovered version of yourself and switch it up. Join the Incubator!

Use the 7-day road map you have created for yourself. Go back and review each of the days. Give yourself time and space to process and feel.

- What support do you have?
- What support do you need?
- What excites you about this project?
- What scares you?
- Reflect on things you need to let go of or step into to being more of YOU!